

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (currently amended) A device comprising:  
at least one stencil configured to apply a pattern onto a substantially flat surface of an article;  
a stencil holder comprising a base member;  
wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;  
wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises a first recess positively securing within circumferential boundaries of the first recess the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder in a predetermined position relative to the at least one stencil;  
wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the first recess;  
wherein the means for securing comprise elements projecting upwardly from the stencil holder;  
wherein the at least one stencil has perforations, wherein the elements are short securing pins configured to match the perforations provided in the at least one stencil.
2. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1, further comprising an adapter configured to be inserted into the first recess for reducing a size of the first recess to varying sizes of the surface of the article so that the first recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article.
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (previously presented) The device according to claim 1, wherein the means for securing comprises a second recess provided in the base member of the stencil holder and surrounding the first recess, wherein the second recess is configured such that, when the at least one stencil is inserted into the second recess, the at least one stencil and the stencil holder form a substantially flush surface.
6. (currently amended) ~~The A device according to claim 1, comprising:~~  
at least one stencil configured to apply a pattern onto a substantially flat surface of an article;

a stencil holder comprising a base member;

wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;

wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises a recess positively securing within circumferential boundaries of the recess the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder in a predetermined position relative to the at least one stencil;

wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the recess;

wherein two of the at least one stencil are provided, wherein the two stencils are embossing stencils and a first one of the embossing stencils is placed into the stencil holder underneath the surface of the article and a second one of the embossing stencils is placed on top of the surface of the article and secured by the means for securing.

7. (currently amended) A stencil holder for at least one stencil for applying a pattern to a surface of an article, the stencil holder comprising:

a base member comprising means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;

wherein the base member comprises a recess positively securing the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder when placing the article into the first recess;

wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the recess;

wherein the means for securing comprise elements projecting upwardly from the base member;

wherein the elements are short securing pins configured to match perforations provided in the at least one stencil.

8. (currently amended) The device stencil holder according to claim 7, further comprising an adapter configured to be inserted into the ~~first~~ recess for reducing a size of the ~~first~~ recess to varying sizes of the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article.

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) ~~The A stencil holder according to claim 9; for at least one stencil for applying a pattern to a surface of an article, the stencil holder comprising:~~

~~a base member comprising means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;~~

~~wherein the base member comprises a recess positively securing the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder when placing the article into the recess;~~

~~wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the recess;~~

~~wherein the means for securing comprise elements projecting upwardly from the base member;~~

wherein the base member has receiving openings and wherein the elements projecting upwardly from the base member are insertable into the receiving openings in different arrangements.

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) A method for applying a pattern onto a substantially flat surface by using a device comprising at least one stencil configured to apply a pattern onto a substantially flat surface of an article; a stencil holder; wherein the stencil holder comprises means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder; wherein the stencil holder comprises a recess positively securing the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder; wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the recess; the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the surface of the article into the stencil holder and positively securing the surface in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder in the recess by circumferential boundaries of the recess;

placing a first stencil onto the stencil holder and the surface of the article in a

- 4 -

4/21/06: Amd for Ser. No. 10/710,603 - Inventor(s): Horst Mellis - Filing Date: 7/23/2004

predetermined position relative to the stencil holder; and

applying a pattern provided by the first stencil onto the surface of the article;

placing a second stencil into the stencil holder before inserting the surface of the article into the stencil holder, wherein the first and second stencils are embossing stencils and in the step of applying a pattern an embossed pattern is created.

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of placing an adapter into the recess before the step of inserting for reducing a size of the recess to the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article.

18. (canceled)

19. (new) The device according to claim 2, wherein the adapter is configured to adjust the recess to a standard paper size.

20. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the adapter is a bar, an angle piece, a U-shaped frame open at one side, or a circumferentially extending frame.

21. (new) The stencil holder according to claim 8, wherein the adapter is configured to adjust the recess to a standard paper size.

22. (new) The stencil holder according to claim 21, wherein the adapter is a bar, an angle piece, a U-shaped frame open at one side, or a circumferentially extending frame.

23. (new) The stencil holder according to claim 11, further comprising an adapter configured to be inserted into the recess for reducing a size of the recess to varying sizes of the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article.

24. (new) The stencil holder according to claim 23, wherein the adapter is configured to adjust the recess to a standard paper size.

25. (new) The stencil holder according to claim 24, wherein the adapter is a bar, an angle piece, a U-shaped frame open at one side, or a circumferentially extending frame.